

heritage institutions. These efforts better serve the needs of constituent communities and have the potential to create new user communities.

Controlled Vocabularies

For many fields in the NCDL implementation, best practice is to select terms from controlled vocabularies, thesauri, and subject heading lists for completion of the subject elements, rather than just using keywords. Employing terminology from controlled vocabularies ensures consistency and can improve the quality of search results, while reducing the likelihood of spelling errors when inputting metadata records. It also allows metadata from multiple institutions to be pulled together and provide meaningful results. Recognizing the diverse nature of the statewide initiatives and the involvement of a broad range of cultural heritage institutions, controlled vocabularies have been expanded to include subject discipline taxonomies and thesauri. Several states are developing geographic-based lists of terms that can be helpful in achieving a level of consistency in terminology. Many thesauri, subject heading lists, and taxonomies are currently available via the web and online links are provided wherever possible. As well, there are several standards for expressing information, such as date (these are referred to as data value standards). These data value standards are also used throughout these guidelines and links are provided to promote better understanding of the variety of different standards that comprise quality metadata generation.

Crosswalks

Crosswalks involve the mapping of the elements of one metadata standard to the corresponding elements fields of another metadata standard. A fully specific crosswalk contains a semantic mapping as well as a conversion specification. Crosswalks provide the ability to create and maintain a set of metadata and to map that metadata into any number of related content metadata standards. In order to build successful crosswalks and mapping schemes, it is important to maintain consistency across metadata standards. NC ECHO is striving to construct such consistent applications to assist in the crosswalk process using metadata best practice guidelines created for the variety of metadata standards being implemented throughout the state. In addition, NC ECHO seeks to promote the creation of metadata that will be consistent with national standards and interpretations.

General Input Guidelines

The best practice is to follow the general grammatical rules of the language involved when entering descriptive information about resources. In addition, it may be useful to consult the *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, 2nd Edition* or *Describing Archives: a Content Standard* for more information and details on general rules and guidelines for data entry. Dublin Core metadata also involves syntax that makes it easier for the computer to understand the metadata information. Separating content and input is important in understanding the relationship between metadata and traditional modes of description. These guidelines include information about content and about an input structure for Dublin Core in HTML. Below are a few general input guidelines. After that, there is a discussion on the HTML input structure which may be used.

Punctuation